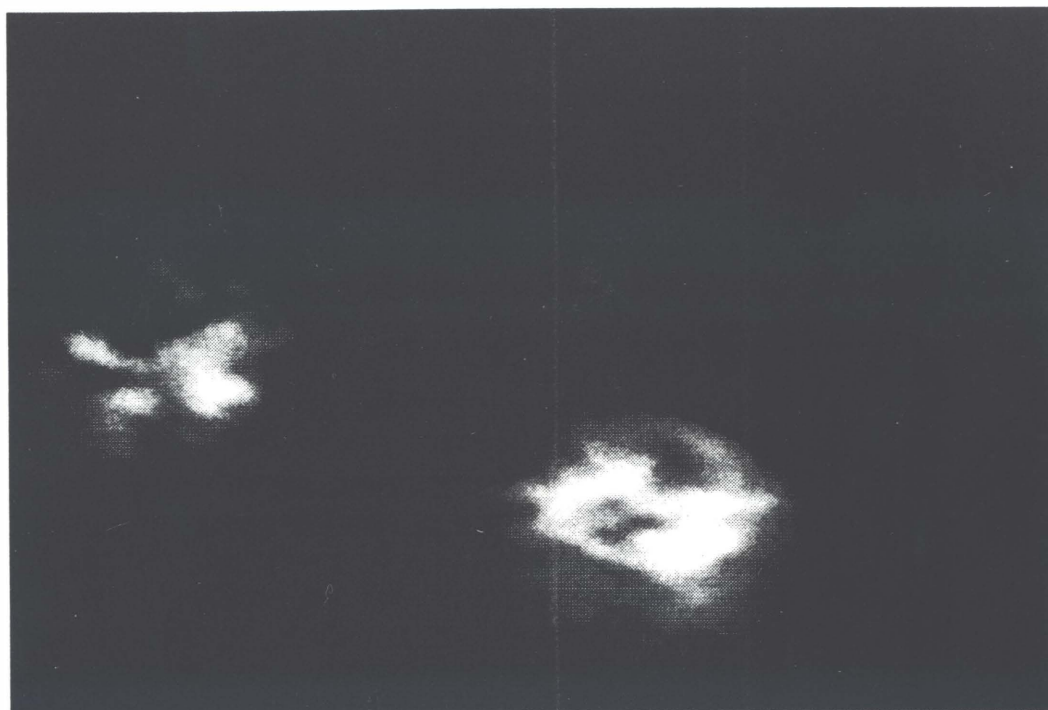


new Ufologist

Number 1



Earthlights: The Abduction Connection

Paul Devereux presents crucial new research

CROP CIRCLES

Is the future nigh? Paul Fuller explains

Animal Mutilation

Albert Budden examines the link with ball lightning

and

Todmorden Revisited

a case history by Jenny Randles

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Editorial

Welcome to this new magazine, which is a venture that has been a year in the planning. This is very much an experimental concept from a number of points of view, but we hope to build it into something lasting and worthwhile.

For a start, this is a journal tied to no group and without any set doctrine. We will publish material on any aspect of UFOlogy, with the proviso that it must contribute towards serious, scientific debate. It is true that we will address the more objective, rational theories as often as we can and not go out of our way to include material about the extraterrestrial hypothesis. However, whilst you will not find these pages filled with reports of alien bases and pickled green men no contribution that has merit will be rejected on the grounds of its content alone.

This first edition has been compiled by the editorial team listed above, who have funded it with their own money, but in future we hope to do something unique in world UFOlogy. Prior to the need to prepare each issue we will have an open editorial gathering at which all readers will be welcome. We will use this as a forum to discuss current issues within the subject, assess significant cases and determine what the content of the next edition should be to make it reflective of the current state of UFOlogy. Then we will jointly decide who should be asked to contribute; although, of course, unsolicited contributions will always be welcome. In that way you can have your say in directing the content, theme and format of this magazine. It will, in all respects, be UFOlogy's own mouthpiece, specifically, of course, but not exclusively, British.

Indeed we will have contributions from around the world and we hope to have regular international columns. In particular we want to do as much as possible to make this a European journal of UFOlogy. So any ideas in that regard would be gratefully received.

There is another sense in which this publication will be unique. It is not attempting to make any money for either its editors or any UFO group, since it does not belong to one. Instead any success that it has and any profit that it makes from sales will be ploughed back into UFO research. The money will form a research fund and applications for its use will be open. Any investigator who wants to do a better job on a case, follow up angles they may not be able to afford or any researcher with an idea for a project that may add new knowledge to the subject can submit proposals. These will be reviewed at the pre-issue gatherings and so, again, all the magazines readers - i.e., you will have the say in where the money goes.

In other words, you will be paying your subscription to receive what we hope will be an informative and responsible high quality journal which has been designed in such a way that any scientist could show it to their skeptical colleagues and not be ashamed of doing so. However, you will also be contributing to new frontiers in UFO research and funding the kind of work that UFOlogy has long needed to do.

We are not opposed to UFO groups. Many of us are members of prominent societies, such as BUFORA. Contributions from and about groups will be welcome, if they express positive work. However, the advantage that this fully independent journal has is that no money must go to stage meetings, pay for administration costs or keep interest within hundreds of members, many of whom may only be generally committed to the field. This will be purely and simply a serious research and investigation journal put together by serious researchers and investigators and whose income will go exclusively towards UFO research and case investigation. It will also do so on a fully open, accountable and democratic basis. We think that qualifies for being called unique.

You can play your full part in this exciting new venture by supporting us now, persuading colleagues to supporting us also so then, together, we can make this work.

BEYOND UFOLOGY: Meeting With The Alien

by Paul Devereux

*Come on without, come on within,
You've not seen nothin' like the Mighty Quinn*
Bob Dylan, "The Mighty Quinn"
[B. Feldman & Co. Ltd., 1970]

If we let Dylan's "Mighty Quinn" symbolise the "alien" at the heart of most mainstream "ufological" thinking, we have a good image of the almost unperceived conceptual split that has taken place within the subject area. On the one hand, there is the focus on unidentified objects seen primarily in the skies, which are perceived — "identified", as it were — by most mainstream ufologists as extra-terrestrial craft. On the other hand, there is the fascination with UFO "abductions". These are seen by ufological traditionalists as being human interactions with the occupants of the extra-terrestrial craft that are seen in our skies. In standard ufology, therefore, it is considered that it is the one and the same problem that is involved.

Beyond Ufology

I beg to differ. I suggest that these two trains of ufological concern are running on separate tracks that most people within standard ufology are mistaken in considering to be the same line. "Abductions" run on an inner track, that of human consciousness, while the things-seen-in-the-sky (when not misperception, hoax, mirage, psycho-social aberration or whatever), run on the outer track of little-understood aspects

of environmental nature. Nevertheless, I shall argue in these pages that there is a "meeting with the alien" waiting at the end of both lines, but in each case the "alien" is different, and hovering just slightly beyond the reach of our current imagination. They are, therefore, truly alien as compared to the half-century-old (and more) idea of the ET, which has become familiar and which so hinders the intellectual life of ufology. The notion of the extra-terrestrial visitor was an important one to have had at an early stage — it set an important process in motion — but it is now well past its sell-by date.

The "aliens" I shall attempt to identify will have at least as great an impact on us as would a meeting with extra-terrestrial life, because, however exciting and traumatic that would be, it would nevertheless come within the compass of what we currently think we understand about ourselves and the universe. The aliens we are about to catch a glimpse of here in these following pages require us to go beyond that compass — indeed, you've "not seen nothing" like these "Mighty Quinns". And we had best prepare ourselves, because the preliminaries for a meeting with both aliens are now in hand with two research development areas whose significance dwarfs anything taking place within the hidebound bounds of the old ufology. As I shall attempt to explain...

The Alien Within

The basic abduction scenario is well-known. In the view of the ufological literalist, a person is taken — usually "floated" — into an alien spacecraft where he or she is subjected to invasive medical and, often, mental investigation at the hands of alien beings ("Grays"). The implanting of small, apparently metallic objects in the body, insemination and other claims have been made by abductees. The purpose is unclear, but suggestions have included a cross-breeding experiment by a dying species of aliens with human stock. The human victim is returned to his or her point of abduction, or other normal, Earthly location, with an incomplete

memory of what has happened.

The literalist interpretation persists despite the lack of any of the “hard” evidence that is so often claimed but which somehow evaporates like dew. To those who have certain specialist knowledge, and who are not the prisoners of the limited literalist perspective, another interpretation of the abduction experience springs to mind — that it is an experience of an altered state of consciousness (ASC). The fact that suggests this, one so often ignored or played down by the literalists, is that over 70 percent of claimed abductees commence their adventure in quiescent if not light trance states: in the person’s bedroom or when he or she is driving — usually at night. To anyone aware of the current research into “lucid dream” consciousness¹ this situation speaks volumes. The lucid dream state is one where a person is asleep but their mind is still consciously active. In such states, dream consciousness appears completely “real”: there is the experience of true three-dimensional space, and all five senses can appear to be functioning.

One can seemingly move around — walk, fly, run, glide — with total realism. It is not merely a vivid dream, but a profound form of ASC (indeed, it is a pity that the term “dream” has come to be involved with its description, which is due simply to historical accident). If one is unaware of the situation, the experiences had in this state are virtually undetectable from those in normal waking consciousness (except for their bizarre aspects). Therefore, the experience can be real (and thus recoverable by regression hypnosis), even if the literalist interpretation is not.

This view is supported further by ongoing psychological study of the “abduction” ASC, in which the work of Kenneth Ring and others is indicating that abductees as a group tend to have suffered a higher than

average background of child abuse.² The significance of this is that children suffering abuse tend to develop a psychological defence mechanism known as “dissociation”, in which they compartmentalise their consciousness so that they can escape from the appalling physical realities that surround them into vivid levels of other mental realities. Later in life, they can be more prone than others to entering ASCs given the appropriate psychological, social or geophysical stimuli. (There are of course many other factors leading to such susceptibility than just a history of child abuse, but child abuse has shown itself in experimental data on abductees and is therefore an indicator of the ASC nature of the abduction experience.)

This ability to dissociate, to move swiftly and effectively into ASCs, was a highly-prized skill in many earlier and traditional societies, where its prime form was exemplified in the person of the shaman, the “walker between the worlds” of everyday living and the spheres of the spirits. The shaman interceded with the spirits on behalf of the tribe for healing, divination or other purposes. He or she may have had a visionary experience in childhood as the result of, perhaps, a severe illness; ³ more often, and perhaps also, he or she would undergo initiatory procedures of a profoundly stressful physical or mental nature. This was to achieve that very ability of dissociation involuntarily developed by many child abuse victims. In the tribal society, however, there was a spiritual and social context (and need) for that ability: there was recognition of it and social and religious “road maps” for its use.

The hard fact is that tribal societies had one technology we still lack — the technology of consciousness. In that regard, it is we who are the primitives.

People within our “tribe” of Westernised societies are undergoing their involuntary ASCs in a cultural context where mechanisation, isolation and depersonalisation is greater than in any society previously. Added to that is the dearth of experiential spiritual life on a culture-wide level: there are only rote religions and insufficiently integrated drug and ritual experiences. There is no longer a consensual cultural niche for such states of consciousness other than the “abduction” scenario. That this experience should be interpreted as being caused by alien machines and extra-terrestrial entities says much about our culture and our times to anyone with the wit to pay attention. Standard old ufology, born in the brave-new-technological-white-walled-tyre-Cold War mentality of the immediate post-World War Two era, is not conducive to the development of that wit.

One of the techniques employed by traditional shamanism to access the ASCs resultant from dissociation was (and is) the use of hallucinogenic plants. One of the key chemical constituents of some of these botanical hallucinogens is DMT (dimethyl-tryptamine). It also occurs naturally in human beings and other mammals.⁴ DMT, originally synthesised in Hungary from Amazonian hallucinogenic snuffs 30 or so years ago, is an extraordinarily powerful and quick-acting hallucinogen (trance is entered within seconds of taking a dose of DMT and can be over in five minutes — perhaps because DMT is not foreign to the human organism and is quickly assimilated), yet is not widely known and is a “relatively obscure drug of abuse”.⁵

It is important not to lump in such tryptamine-based compounds willy-nilly with other hallucinogens: they yield distinct effects. A highly significant one from our point of view is that many people who have undergone DMT trance tell of experiences that Dr Rick Strassman

describes as “encounters with... ‘alien’ intelligences”.⁶

Terence McKenna, a major authority on hallucinogens, is one of the few to have written descriptively about the effects of DMT, and in his *The Archaic Revival*⁷, a collection of his interviews and papers, he has important observations to share with regard to the “meeting with the alien” so often encountered in the DMT trance.

DMT, McKenna notes, works directly on the language centres of the brain — one enters into a dialogue with Something-or-Other. In this most intense of ASCs, one enters a “somehow insulated” place, that is fully, vividly real albeit exceedingly weird. One “meets entities”. McKenna describes these variously as “self-transforming machine elves”, “dynamically contorting topological modules”, “tryptamine munchkins” and “fractal elves”.⁸ “These beings,” writes McKenna, “are like fractal reflections of some previously hidden and suddenly autonomous part of one’s own psyche.” McKenna found these entities to emit “sounds like music, like language” which turn simultaneously into visible phenomena beyond description. “One hears and beholds a language of alien meaning that is conveying alien information that cannot be Englished”.⁹

This sense of contact with alien entities is not the mere subjective experiences of one or two experimenters. The Haitians took it (in the form of *Piptadenia Peregrina* seeds) to “communicate with their gods”¹⁰, for instance. In presenting numerous reports of DMT subjects who claimed contact with some kind of alien entity during their ASC, researcher Peter Meyer states that “the phenomenon of apparent alien contact is so impressive” in the DMT experience that the matter “deserves serious investigation”.¹¹

What shocked McKenna after his first DMT experience was the feeling that “right here and now, one quanta away, there is raging a universe of active intelligence that is transhuman, hyperdimensional, and extremely alien”.¹² McKenna cites another tryptamine variation of DMT, psilocybin (4-phosphoryloxy-DMT), found in the “magic mushrooms” (*Stropharia cubensis*) of pre-Hispanic Mexican Indians, to whom the mushroom was *teonanacatl*, the “flesh of the gods”. The experience of psilocybin can be similar to DMT, but takes longer to act and lasts longer. “There is the same confrontation with an alien intelligence,” McKenna informs.¹³

The nature of this tryptamine entity experience is open for interpretation. Meyer has suggested the tryptamine aliens may be inter-dimensional beings or intelligences, time-travellers or discarnate spirits, all of which can only communicate to humans in the appropriate frequency of consciousness. McKenna is likewise open to possibilities. Shamans call the entities “spirits”, but McKenna observes that may be like a quantum scientist talking of “charm”, both terms being “a technical gloss for a very complicated concept”. He has provocatively suggested that the sacred mushroom might itself be an extra-terrestrial (“The main problem with searching for extraterrestrials is to recognize them”)! Or, again, McKenna has mused, perhaps the mushroom is simply a biological interface that allows some distant entity to communicate to human consciousness. But, perhaps much closer to the mark, McKenna has written:

It may instead be what I’ve recently come to suspect — that the human soul is so alienated from us in our present culture that we treat it as an extraterrestrial. To us the most alien thing in the cosmos is the human soul. Aliens Hollywood-style could arrive on earth tomorrow and the DMT trance would remain more weird and

continue to hold more promise for useful information for the human future.¹⁴

My guess is that the “Grays” reported in the ASC our culture calls “abductions” are indeed distorted views of the greatest alien there is — the Self, the deep nature of the human psyche.

The open, culturally-visible meeting with that alien may now in train, for the first scientific, co-ordinated research programme into the nature of the DMT experience has commenced. After preliminary research, Dr Rick Strassman, known for his work into the functions of the pineal gland,¹⁵ has been awarded a U.S. Federal government research grant. The programme, being conducted at the School of Medicine in the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, began in December 1992 and will be complete within three years. Strassman wants to know why a substance like DMT occurs naturally in the human brain...

The Alien Without

Most UFO researchers would agree that the great majority of all reported UFO sightings result from misperception of mundane objects, hoax, mirage effects, confabulation of unfamiliar sights or other psychological aberration caused by psychosocial stress, and so on. This goes almost without saying. The crucial concern is whether or not there are some genuinely unknown phenomena that are also being occasionally seen and reported — signals within the noise, if you like. Those of the extra-terrestrial persuasion are sure that there are such sightings, and that they are caused by alien craft. I’m also convinced that there is “signal in the noise”, but I have maintained for many years now that the phenomena are an exotic form of natural energy originating from Earth itself, possibly related to earthquake lights and ball lightning, but with some important distinctions.^{16, 17}

Research reveals that these “earth lights” (also called “BOLs” by some researchers) appear in highly localised regions — they are terrain-related. In some places, locals have seen them for generations. These zones have so far been found to contain recurring geological characteristics, such as significant faulting, seismic history, mineral deposits or bodies of water (which can cause micro-quakes). Detailed work in certain zones has shown an overwhelming correlation between lights incidence and surface faulting. Such an apparent geological connection is highlighted by eighteenth-century mining texts which tell of the use of lightballs emerging from the ground in prospecting for mineral seams, especially copper veins. (Recent findings described in *The Ley Hunter* journal - Box 92, Penzance, Cornwall TR18 2XL, U.K. - show that this method of prospecting was being used at the Bere Alston copper and arsenic mine in Devon up until the early years of this century!) .

Recent research by U.S. geologist John Derr suggests that earth light zones can also be produced artificially, in the vicinity of works where liquids are being injected into the Earth’s crust.¹⁸

Prime amongst current theories concerning the phenomena is Michael Persinger’s hypothesis (Tectonic Stress Theory) that a strain field is produced during tectonic flexing of the Earth’s crust in suitable zones, not necessarily leading to earthquake or tremor, and that this generalised field can move through an area, causing electrical and geomagnetic changes and focusing in certain topographical and geological configurations, producing light phenomena.¹⁹

Ethnology reveals that earth lights have been seen by many cultures around the world, and are usually interpreted as spirits of one form or another. In West Africa the lights are called “aku”, devil; the Penobscot Indians of Maine thought they were the spirits of shamans flying through the night

or else “fire creatures” (“eskuda’hit”); the Wintu of California called them “spirit eaters”; Malaysians call them “pennangal”, the spectral heads of women who have died in childbirth; Hawaiian islanders call the lights “akualele”, spirits; Australian Aborigines call them “minmin” lights. The Rigo of Papua New Guinea feel that they go “out-of-body” during sleep and balls of light seen in the night sky are people’s spirits flying free. Around Darjeeling, India, the lights are thought to be the lanterns of the Little Men, “chota admis”, to go near which is to court illness or death. In Celtic lands the lights are seen as fairies — literally “fairy lights”. The Aymara Indians of the Andes have a detailed knowledge and lore concerning meteorology, and they single out curious light effects, “sullaje”, which they insist are not lightning or other known meteorological phenomena.

It is clear that the lights have been seen as religious manifestations in some cultures, for temples have been built dedicated to them. A tower in a temple complex on a peak of the Chinese mountain Wu T’ai Shan, for instance, was built specifically to observe the “Bodhisattva lights”. A temple at Purnigiri, India, is dedicated to the lights that habitually appear around the site (the temple is built over a fault). There is even a Christian chapel dedicated to “St Mary of the Lights” in the Swiss Alps. It may be that prehistoric standing stones in western Europe were likewise raised in honour of places haunted by light phenomena, and which were perceived as being spirits or gods: a long list is developing of historical accounts and modern eyewitness reports of lights at such megalithic sites.

There have been many interpretations of the lights in Western Europe over the centuries, in fact. Perhaps the most common was that they were fiery dragons flying through the sky. In fact, recent special translation of Latin texts, together with other archive discoveries, shows that the matter was a

subject of scholarly debate for some centuries in the late Middle Ages. A later scholar, Thomas Hill, said in 1590 that the lights were some kind of “a fume kindled” and only looked like dragons. Other interpretations down the years have included “signs from God”, “omens”, “meteors”. In recent times they have been seen as enemy airships and, in World War Two, “foo fighters”. Now, they have been caught up in the “UFO” interpretation, though in some areas where they recur they are sometimes seen as ghosts or “spooklights”.

Typically, the lights appear as “basketball-sized” globes, but smaller and larger ones (up to several metres across) have also been reliably reported. Also, the lights can take on many shapes — strips, triangles, amorphous forms. Close eyewitnesses often report an inner, “teeming” activity. The lights have been seen emerging from the ground: during a 1988-89 seismic survey by Quebec University, for instance, observers witnessed lightballs metres across emerge from the ground and rise hundreds of metres into the air. They can hover, travel rapidly through the air, perform aerobatic manoeuvres, merge together, shapeshift. Close encounter witnesses also report a buzzing or pressure felt in the ears.

The lights have been photographed, by individual witnesses and by teams, such as the group which studied an outbreak of lights in the Hessdalen valley, Norway, in the early-mid 1980s, and the university group that studied the Piedmont lights outbreak in southern Missouri in the late 1970s.

The nature of the light energy is not known, but it seems to have electromagnetic (EM) aspects: the lights seem to favour the vicinity of charge collectors like TV masts, isolated buildings on or near faulting, high tension cables and mountain peaks. If they are some form of plasma, that would explain their occasional appearance in daylight as “metallic discoids”, because the density

differences of one medium within another, like a gas bubble within glass or water, can reflect light so as to give the visual appearance of a shiny, metallised surface. (There also seems to be some “anode-diode” effect, in that earth “lights” — and ball lightning too — can appear jet black, as though absorbing all light. I have personally witnessed this.)

These phenomena clearly have characteristics, too widely reported to be safely ignored, which suggest that they represent a form of physics currently unknown to us. The ability of the lights to assume coherent shapes, as well as to reform themselves into other shapes, is not understood (as is indeed the case with ball lightning). Another recurring observation is that the lights can sometimes be seen from one direction, but not from another. A light witnessed (and photographed) in 1973 by an American physicist in California exhibited evidence of having mass (it created shock waves in the air ahead of it as it travelled) then of having no mass (stopping without deceleration). Also, the examination of some photographs, and the behaviour of lights’ echoes on radar screens, suggest that earth lights are in fact going “on” and “off” very rapidly, though persistence of vision (“flicker fusion”) makes them appear to be constantly shining. The lights can also sometimes leave burn marks on vegetation and people, while on other occasions no physical damage seems to follow from close encounter.

There are two even more bizarre reported characteristics of earth lights. The first is that in certain circumstances people who get close to these lights seem to experience mental effects such as confusion, blackout, amnesia and ASCs in which visual and auditory hallucinatory material is released into consciousness, sometimes accompanied with dissociation sensations like out-of-body experience. (It is this factor which occasionally links this external phenomenon

with the “abduction” ASC: there do seem to be a few cases that suggest that it was the close encounter with a lightform that triggered “abduction” experiences.) It is hypothesised that EM fields associated with the manifestation of the lights, or actually emitted from them, affect brain function. It is known, for instance, that certain areas of the brain are sensitive to magnetic fields. Such fields may be responsible for the occasionally-reported concurrent “poltergeist” effects in the vicinity of earth lights outbreaks. These effects include not only disembodied voices, but a crunching sound on the ground, metal doorlatches moving of their own accord, objects flying about, and even instances of metal utensils twisting and warping.

The strangest of all reported characteristics, however, is potentially the most significant factor concerning earth light phenomena. It is repeatedly reported that earth lights sometimes show conscious or quasi-conscious behavioural traits, such as appearing to act inquisitively and playfully.

The idea of intelligent energy is obviously a difficult one, and sceptical scientists are right to point out that false meaning can be all too easily read into random movements of a light. Nevertheless, the most experienced people with regard to observing and photographing earth lights, members of the Hessdalen team, have strenuously maintained to me that perhaps ten percent of the lights clearly reacted to team members’ movements, and that a “reading into random motions” did not explain what they witnessed. The Piedmont team came up with almost the same percentage of lights that they felt interacted with them. And some claims are, in fact, more unambiguous than even this. For example, retired Yorkshire policeman Anthony Dodd has reported that when doing night duty on the moors he could attract strange lights by switching on his police-car flashing beacons. (Dodd maintains the lights were craft, but expert examination of his own photographs of the phenomena do not bear this out.) Again, author John Keel has had purple lightballs in the Ohio Valley hop out of the way of his flashlight beam.

There are many other examples of reported apparent sentience on the part of such lightforms, and I myself have even seen a light phenomenon that changed its shape meaningfully as I and over a dozen other witnesses observed it. Very recent research has uncovered earth light “lair” in a remote region of Australia, where lights appear virtually at all times and interact with local bush workers and Aborigines and are reported to behave “like animals would respond to humans” (current investigation).

So it seems that at the very least we may have in earth lights an energy with some very unusual geophysical properties with much to teach science. Because of some of the more bizarre reported effects — such as lights being seen from only one angle, lights exhibiting the effects of mass and weightlessness simultaneously or in rapid sequence, and lights going “on” and “off” with rapid frequency — it has occurred to me that we may be witnessing in earth lights the sort of energy fluctuation effects we would normally associate with sub-atomic, quantum, levels, somehow “writ large” by nature. In discussing such a “macro-quantum” possibility with a leading-edge quantum physicist, it seems this may indeed be possible.

The thread of physics that earth lights may ultimately be found to relate to is something called zero-point energy (ZPE). This is literally something from nothing, in that it is the fluctuation in empty space — the vacuum. (The term “zero-point” refers to the fact that the motion exists even at a temperature of absolute zero where no thermal effects can remain.)

These random vacuum fluctuations (“jitter” or *zitterbewegung*) jiggle atoms around and are known or suspected to give rise to a range of observed phenomena — perhaps even gravity. The sea of ZPE dynamically interacts with atoms in such a way as to provide the stability of matter: without it, everything would collapse, dissipate. Electromagnetic ZPE comes either from the background radiation left over from the Big Bang, or, more likely, is generated by the quantum-fluctuation motion of the charged particles

constituting matter in a self-generating feedback cycle. The energies involved are tiny per fluctuation, but because there are so many the cumulative effect can be immense — it has been suggested that there is enough ZPE in the vacuum of a lightbulb to boil all Earth's oceans.

As physicist Hal Puthoff explains “these fluctuations can be intense enough to cause particles to form from the vacuum spontaneously, provided they disappear again before violating the uncertainty principle”.²⁰ We do not notice this vast energy sea in which we are immersed because it is a uniform action throughout space. Nevertheless, it can be “interrupted” in various ways, and scientists have been learning to interact with it energetically and thermodynamically to produce measurable physical effects. Puthoff and others are looking at ways energy can be extracted from the vacuum. Whole new technologies, pollution-free energy and conceptually-different electronics seem to be waiting in the wings.

This sea of ZPE may be the “universal” energy known as ch'i, ki, prana, mana and a thousand other names by esoteric philosophies around the world and throughout the ages. It may interact with consciousness (after all, our neurons can operate at near-quantum levels and they in any case ultimately arise out of the ZPE sea like everything else).

And mention of consciousness brings me back again to that most important potential characteristic of earth lights referred to above: their possible conscious or quasi-conscious nature. I have been drawing attention to this for several years now, and Michael Persinger has written:

There is much more to the basic premise of the Tectonic Strain Theory than we have acknowledged. When one realises the multitude of geological formations and geochemical combinations through which the energy contained within tectonic stress can be manifested... one must expect phenomena to be created whose characteristics are beyond contemporary

explanations...

Considering the extreme focal nature of each... event compared to the immense field from which it originates, one would expect properties that are as yet undefined. Our concept of the geopsyche (Persinger and Lafreniere, 1975) complements the idea of Devereux that there could be an interaction between cognitive processes and earth forces.²¹

Earth lights may represent an entirely uninvestigated species of phenomena that could revolutionise our whole understanding of the relationship between mind and matter. The idea that consciousness occurs only in biological matter is more habit than anything else. There is no fundamental reason why consciousness should have developed on this planet only through biological processes. Sufficiently complex and exotic energy-forms might also have developed a consciousness capability at some level.

So the earth light could be the “alien without”: another form of consciousness inhabiting this planet with us; a conscious or quasi-conscious energy-form older than ourselves.

A meeting with this alien is long overdue. I have sought and called for such a meeting for a long while, and now at last it appears that attempts to test conscious interaction with these lights will take place. It is too premature right now to detail the research going on, but various intriguing developments have been emerging with regard to earth lights research. For instance, I have been working with the International Consciousness Research Laboratories (ICRL), an informal consortium of scientists and scholars who cross disciplines and are sponsored by the Fetzer Institute in the USA; Japanese plasma physicist Y-H Ohtsuki has likewise been visiting earth light “zones” around the world, and the 10-year old “Project Hessdalen” is being reconstituted, with better backing and resources than before. Furthermore, as a result of a March, 1994, conference in Hessdalen, a new international network of scientists and scholars studying

aspects of the earth light problem has been formed. And so on. From the point of view of the work I have been involved with - at least - the search has been on for the best place to study and, indeed, meet the lights. We have narrowed it down to one or two locations. The first historic experiment will take place at one of these places in 1994 or 1995.

And it will truly be historic, let us not minimise the fact, if the lights do prove positive in the consciousness-interactivity tests we are devising. We will have made the first formal contact with a consciousness-form alien to anything we have known. This would be as momentous as the first footstep on the moon, and as important — perhaps even more paradigm-shattering — than a meeting with extra-terrestrial beings.

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Ball-Lightning and Animal Mutilation Cases

by Albert Budden

I have long suspected that the animal mutilation phenomenon is a mixture of little known natural phenomena and human copycat activity, muddying the waters and creating background noise around the “signal” of natural events. This has turned out to be the case with crop-circles; certainly applies to poltergeist outbreaks and is the case with UFOs.

This mixture can be very difficult to analyse, which are the genuine natural events and which are copied and elaborated on by people ?

In the case of crop-circles this elaboration took the form of increasingly complex patterns or pictograms. Poltergeist outbreaks are not all so-called psycho-kinetic events, and contain aspects where the focus person exhibits automatic behaviour during which they reorganise objects in the house or carry out some kind of domestic routine (albeit often as a distorted or bizarre version of normal activities) and have absolutely no memory of having done so. These amnesiac automatisms as they are called in the medical literature, are due to a complex epileptiform condition that is outside the scope of this article to explain.

The point is however, that like crop-circles, poltergeist activity is six to one and half a dozen of the other, as they say.

With UFOs, there are unclassified sets of aerial lights referred to as unidentified atmospheric phenomena or UAPs, upon which close

encounter experiences are superimposed, partly because of the huge machinery of the flying-saucer mythology, and partly because they emit electromagnetic fields and affect the brain. The mythology aspect is reinforced by fantasy-prone investigators in some cases, who conspire, often in a semi-conscious way, to interpret what the witness has really experienced as an exotic alien intelligence event.

This is a well-known effect in transactional analysis and is tired old stuff at this stage of the game. However, I am wondering why the animal mutilation phenomenon should be any different, i.e. a core set of natural events which prompt an elaborated copycat activity which is then compounded by investigators who deep down, really want a damn good mystery.

Often, such investigators have no scientific or investigative background prior to their involvement with anomalies, and exhibit no real deductive or inductive capabilities with reference to the scientific world. They therefore are unaware of the range of unusual effects which are associated with natural events. It is not too difficult to call the overall process from witness-interview to best-seller as the enigma industry.

But what possible natural phenomenon could produce the cleanly incised ears, anuses, udders, genitalia, oral tissue etc. ? These mutilations are clearly beyond the capabilities of anyone, and present witnesses with completely bloodless, precisely incised amputations and tissue stripping etc. What could possibly do this ? The answer is BALL-LIGHTNING or maybe other electrical phenomena.

Let us now look at this proposal as a hypothesis in scientific terms.

TECHNICAL ASPECTS

During an electrical storm, there are a number of lightning strikes in a relatively localised area. These strikes produce an associated

electromagnetic field in which the ball-lightning (BL) phenomenon is produced. These strike-associated lightning balls are transient and represent extremely energetic centres of electrical and thermal energies.

BLs behave in the atmosphere according to the local ambient field conditions and represent a non-earthed aspect of the lightning strike. They vary in energetic levels and carry with them a range of electromagnetic (EM) fields. However, their transitory nature rests partly upon the inevitable passage of their electrical charge to earth.

A BL may travel some distance from the site of the strike or expire near to it. An animal in an open field represents a conductor to earth, and lightning strikes have killed many such grazing animals. Therefore, if they attract strikes due to their earthing potential, they will also attract BL.

BL, encountering an animal will act upon it as a means to earth. The BL charge will take the "easiest" path of least resistance. The animals' ocular, aural, oral, uro-genital and anal apertures and tracts present just such a path of least resistance. They act as wave-guides which engage the EM fields around the BL, and these organic pipes guide the BL into the animal's interior causing death through a surge of current through the animal's system, giving rise to cardiac arrest and insult to the brain.

On the animal's surface, the electro-thermal "shell" (Turner 1993) of the BL will expel its energies in a characteristic fashion. It evidently moulds itself to the contours around the anus, mouth, ears, eyes, genitals etc. The electro-thermal energies of the "shell" then produce the characteristic trauma described in animal mutilation cases.

The extreme heat associated with the shell will burn into the hide and/or soft tissue producing the characteristic bloodless "cookie-cutter" incision, cauterising the capillaries and preventing blood loss. The water in any plasma or other tissue products will be converted immediately to steam and evaporated due to the intense heat. Also, due to the fields

associated with the BL in the microwave range (500 MHz UHF) the valency bonds of water break causing volatilization due to the separation of hydrogen and oxygen. This not only contributes to the BL's thermal effect upon the animal, i.e. hydrogen and oxygen being extremely flammable, but is incidentally, probably the mechanism producing the explosive action of BL as a mixture of these gasses produces this energetic effect on ignition.

In simple terms, the inner layers of the BL "shell" cut into the animal's tissue with an intense electro-thermal action. The organs and extremities associated with their wave-guiding bodily apertures are incised by the BL by the mechanisms already outlined, and the remaining intensely dehydrated tissues burnt to a cinder and dispersed. This is why animals in these cases are found with missing ears, genitals etc., or with jaws and tails stripped of flesh leaving only bone tissue.

This "shell" of the BL contains a plasma at an extremely high range of temperatures, i.e. several thousands of degrees, which effectively removes the animal tissue by the processes described (volatisation, dehydration and vaporisation).

To summarise therefore : It is the overall structure of BL which imposes upon the form of the animal at bodily apertures. It moulds itself to the animal's body contours; the outer shell containing an extremely energetic ionised plasma. This acts selectively and destructively upon the tissue it surrounds providing the effects found in animal mutilation cases.

THE STRUCTURE OF BALL LIGHTNING

David Turner, a scientist at the University of Bristol, has submitted a new theory of ball lightning to the Royal Society. His speciality is the behaviour of salts in steam, and working at the Central Electricity Generating Board before it was privatised, he acted in a consultancy role advising on the thermodynamics involved in a pressurised water reactor, relating to safety factors.

Realising that very similar conditions prevail in a thunder storm where the air is extremely humid and ions are formed when the atmosphere "breaks down" due to intense electric fields, he proposes the formation of a localised ionic plasma of temperatures up to several thousand

degrees. He then uses his knowledge of chemistry to model ionic conditions in cool humid air, as found in storm conditions, in an ambient electric field.

Turner finds that a structure similar to an onion is set up around a central plasma (see diagram 1.). These successive spherical shells are distinct because they are dominated by separate chemical processes. The outer surface is relatively cool, and the BL contains a variety of layers encasing an energetic plasma core.

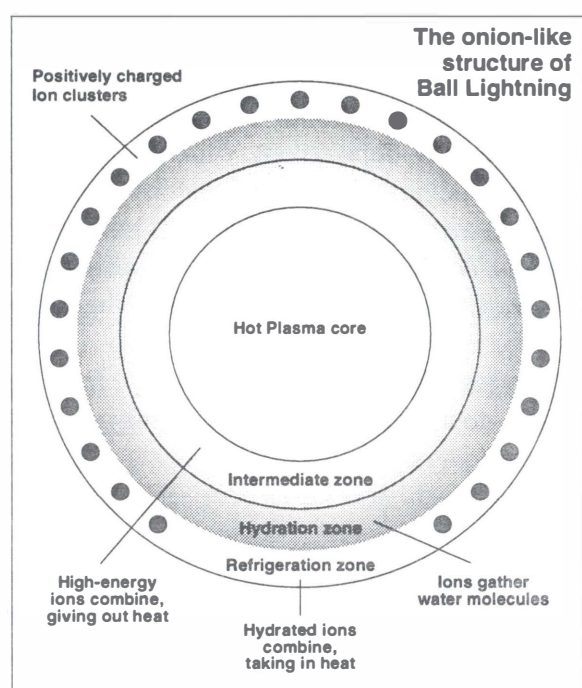


Diagram 1.

It is my proposal that it is the effect of this structure of concentric shells around a hot plasma that is responsible for many of the animal mutilation cases reported. This is circumstantially supported by consistent reports of unexplained aerial lights in the vicinity of such cases.

Let us now look at an example of this animal mutilation phenomenon. I am indebted to Joseph Dormer of the Fylde UFO Investigation group for the following case :

THE WESTBURY WHITE HORSE MUTILATION

“On Saturday, 30th July, 1990 a researcher friend and I (both wishing to remain anonymous) journeyed to the White Horse hill

near Bratton, to begin an on-location study of crop circles.

The following morning at about 7.15 a.m. we discovered a mutilated white horse, collapsed at the rear of the famous hill (opposite the White Horse monument) at the bottom of a very steep horse-shoe shaped valley.

It was a white male horse lying dead on its left side. Its feet were all caught up in a large link fence. Its sex organ was cleanly removed, along with its left ear.

There was a mass of foam protruding from each nostril and its eyes were bulging, both indicating that it had died ... in agony. The whole area around the horse was free of blood, only one drop could be found about four feet away. and no bigger than a 10 pence piece. This struck as very odd, along with the partially collapsed fence (where it had caught its feet) that showed no signs of blood, despite it being very close to the gaping wound - clearly indicating that it had not wounded itself. We looked for the missing organ and ear, but found nothing. There was also a pile of dung about twelve feet away. Somehow between that pile of dung and where it lay, something terrible had happened.

The horse had died only a couple of hours before our discovery (or less) as the foam suggested. Rigor mortis was beginning to set in ... We were the first people to the scene after the event, although one other researcher was out early that morning... before ourselves not far from the top of the valley. He did not investigate. “

My reading of this event is that the horse had tumbled down the slope from the summit of the hill or ridge overlooking the spot where it was found and had been hit by a lightning strike on this high point. The ADT Unit of the National Meteorological Library did in fact log thundery weather over the south of England on the day in question. The horse crashed into the fence thereby felling part of it and caught

its hooves in the links. A lightning strike on the animal at the summit had thrown up a number of small ball-lightning centres which had then expended their electro-thermal energies to earth through the horse as described, cauterising off the ear and sex organ. The dung was ejected as a result of severe fright due to this trauma.

The year of 1993 has been sprinkled with newspaper reports of horse mutilations in the Home Counties of the UK, and suspects have been detained by the police and charged.

Thus we have the mixture as before as outlined : a set of natural core events alongside human activity which by design or interpretation, both mimics and elaborates on them.

Finally, as a general statement, British investigators do not have such fantasy-prone inclinations as their American counterparts, and this is reflected in the fact that the UK does not have the animal mutilation phenomenon on the scale that the USA has, even after the figures have been adjusted for spatial and demographic differences. Also, as a throw-away comment, we are much more of a nation of animal lovers and there may be cultural inhibitions regarding such copy-cat animal abuse.

Therefore, although the uncanny and intriguing juxtaposition of a dead and mutilated white horse with the White Horse hill and monument is not lost on me, let us not be influenced, and let us keep our heads, and for once in this enigma-study field, let pure chance take the blame, especially as white horses are properly called "greys".

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Talking Point

■ On the 6th May 1994 a unique initiative was launched by three American UFO groups - issuing a joint declaration on the Roswell UFO crash. Walt Andrus of MUFON, Mark Rodeghier of CUFOS and Richard Hall of FUFOR request that an amnesty be called offering protection to all witnesses to be able to come forward and tell what they know about this UFO crash free from risk of prosecution. An American financial investigations department with top security clearance began a document search in January and promises to reveal all it finds in the government archives. A TV movie "Roswell" appears in the USA in August and cinema release in the UK is expected in the winter. Steven Spielberg is in the early stages of planning a Roswell movie for 1997 release - to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the case.

■ UFO titles due out this summer include "WITHOUT CONSENT" by Philip Mantle and Carl Nagatis (Ringpull, June), billed as the first British investigation into abductions - which is not an accurate claim. Both "Abduction" (Jenny Randles) and "Perspectives" (John Spencer) cover this topic. In August Piatkus publish "The Complete book of UFOs" by Peter Hough and Jenny Randles. Despite the title this is a 300+ page detailed pictorial history of the UFO phenomenon in the past 100 years.

■ Strange but true ? - is a new seven-part series produced by LWT it will be shown this autumn on the ITV network. It is based upon a pilot show which was aired last September. There are 14 stories in the new series several with UFO themes. The series was filmed both in the UK and abroad with assistance from Peter Hough and Jenny Randles.

CropCircles - Do They Have A Future And Did They Have a Past

by Paul Fuller & Jenny Randles

1. What Is The True Extent of Crop Circle Hoaxing ?

Over the past two years the little world of “cereology” has taken a real hammering. First there was the explosive claim in the TODAY newspaper of September 9th 1991 that two men in their late '60s, Doug Bower and Dave Chorley, had been making crop circles for more than a decade. These men claimed to have made all the early crop circles in Wessex, including the “first” modern circles at Westbury and Cheesefoot Head. Following this in 1992 Jim Schnabel and Robert Irving exposed a second major group of hoaxers known as the United Bureau of Investigation (U.B.I.).¹ According to Schnabel and Irving this group of crop circle hoaxers were based in the Beckhampton area of Wiltshire and allegedly had links with several crop circle research groups.

In an article I published in 1992 there was a map showing the location of 20 groups or individuals known to be engaged in crop circle hoaxing in Britain². In the first edition of our book (published in 1990) we drew attention to several hoaxes perpetrated during the previous decade - including

those at Westbury (1983) and Cheesefoot (1986). More recent information from a variety of sources demonstrates that there are now more than 30 individuals or groups known to be involved in crop circle hoaxing in Britain alone³. Several overseas cases can be added to this growing list. The sudden realisation that crop circle hoaxing is endemic has caused considerable alarm and concern in the crop circle research community. What on earth is going on ? Why are so many people making crop circles ? And if there are so many crop circle hoaxers on the loose were there ever any “real” circles in the first place ?

2. The Doug and Dave Phenomenon

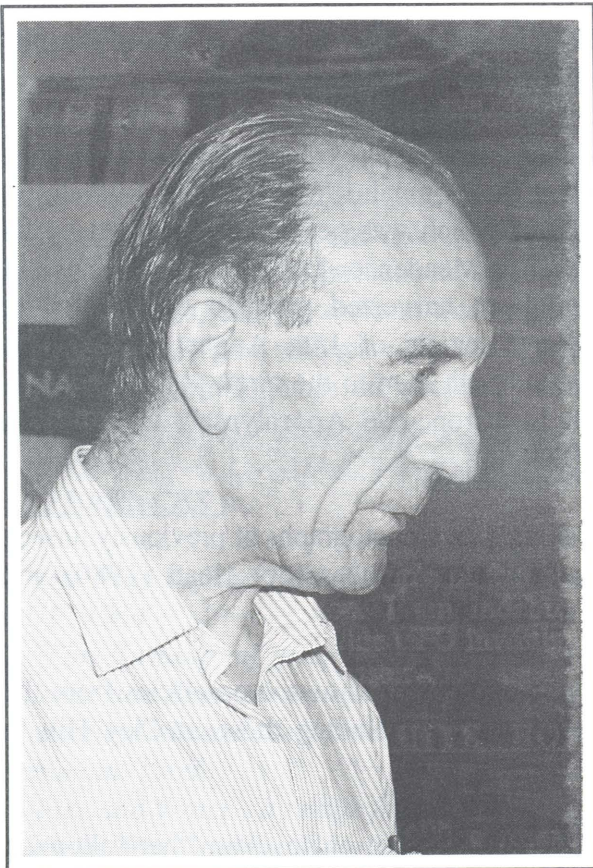
In July and August 1993⁴ two meetings were held at Marlborough in Wiltshire and Covent Garden in London in order to allow Doug Bower to put his evidence to the crop circle community. The meetings were organised by Ken Brown, a researcher with the Centre for Crop Circle Studies, to allow the dissemination of evidence on a one-to-one basis. At both meetings Doug Bower presented photographic evidence which greatly strengthened his claim to have begun making crop circles in the mid 1970s. This evidence included :-

- Doug's own photographs of what he claimed were the original 1980 Westbury formations, one of which was never photographed by Dr Terence Meaden or Ian Mrzyglod because it had been harvested prior to the “Wiltshire Times” article of 15th August 1980 which alerted both men to the circles [see plates 15-18 in “Cropcircle Apocalypse”, Circlevision, 1993];
- Doug's own photographs of previously unseen formations at Cheesefoot Head (1980) and Litchfield (1982);
- photographs of known crop circles from the early years - including those at Cley Hill in 1982.

Ken Brown went on to claim that following his investigation of Doug and Daves' claim he

had managed to compile maps of all the locations where Doug and Dave had allegedly created circles. According to Brown these "red dot maps" contained over 40 circles which had never been publicised in the crop circle literature. he claimed that circle researchers Don Tuersley and Richard Andrews had both approached him and confirmed the locations of these previously unpublicised circles. Tuersley has been investigating crop circles since 1983, Richard Andrews since 1988.

This evidence is deeply damaging for the existence of a "genuine" crop circle phenomenon because it implies that every crop circle visited by the crop circle research community in the 1980s and 1990s was a man-made hoax. It also implies that sharp-edged crop circles post-dating 1980 were either Doug and Daves' original circles or copycat hoaxes perpetrated by the numerous other groups of hoaxers known to be operating throughout Britain. With facts like these "cereology" has earned the distinction of becoming the fastest declining business in anomaly research.



Doug Bower (Paul Fuller).

3. Back-down

Over the past two years many of the leading crop circle researchers have backed down and accepted that most (if not all) modern-day crop circles are man-made hoaxes. In late 1991 Terence Meaden, Jenny Randles and myself were the first crop circle researchers to publicly accept Doug and Daves' claim⁵. Jenny Randles and myself had long argued that hoaxing was a possibility for some formations due to the escalating patterns, the fact that hoaxers had occasionally been caught red handed making circles and because of what we termed name playing - the peculiar ability of crop circles to turn up at locations which were synonymous with the alien UFO mythology (eg at Cley Hill, Warminster and Cradle Hill, Alfriston). Indeed, in the first edition of "Crop Circles, A Mystery Solved" (published in 1990) we argued that the extent of hoaxing was being grossly underestimated and warned that ever more fantastic shapes would appear - just as they did within months of our prediction. These acceptances of the Doug and Dave story were all made in the public arena. By contrast other crop circle researchers reacted in wholly different ways.

According to Ken Brown in January 1993 Colin Andrews - co-author of the best-selling "Circular Evidence" - twice admitted to him that he believed there were only "a dozen circles throughout history" which he accepted as "genuine", the rest he dismissed as man-made hoaxes⁶. Andrews' recently appeared to confirm Brown's claim in his CPR International Newsletter (Winter 1994). In a phone call to Dr Terence Meaden in June 1993 Andrews' co-author Pat Delgado also accepted the Doug and Dave claim in full. To date neither Andrews or Delgado have published a full public statement confirming or denying their alleged acceptance of the Doug and Dave claim⁷.

Enter George Wingfield of the Centre for Crop Circle Studies. On a live Granada TV programme he accused Doug and Dave of being government agents who were part of a "disinformation" plot to keep the truth about the crop circles from the public⁸. Wingfield claimed that this "fraudulent scam" was proven by the "MBF Services" tag

at the end of Today's exclusive story. According to articles in "The Cerealogist" and "The Circular" Wingfield alleged that an anonymous source had confirmed to him that "MBF Services" was a cover for M.I.5 and that at a secret Ministerial Meeting it was agreed to use "disinformation" to deflect mounting public hysteria over the crop circles^{9,10}. Doug and Dave, quite naturally, denied these allegations, as did the government departments involved.

4. The Current Situation

As the "science" of "cereology" sinks into a soup of its own making it has become clear that the whole phenomenon was a typical example of how the UFO community allows itself to fall for the most audacious of hoaxes. It is also a perfect example of how scientific anomalies are treated by both Proponents and Skeptics. The emergence of the phenomenon during the 1980s gave the UFO community a golden opportunity to demonstrate that it was no longer interested in promoting exotic solutions to the UFO evidence. Jenny Randles and myself pleaded with the UFO community to take that opportunity to demonstrate that UFOlogists were capable of being skeptical objective researchers¹¹. Our reward was to be threatened with legal action and to be accused in one of UFOlogy's "leading" journals of being "two of the most monumental and egregious liars at large in our country today"¹². Predictably the response of most other UFO groups and magazines around the globe was to leap upon the crop circles as proof of the alien mythology invented by Ray Palmer and his science fiction associates in 1947. By doing so the UFO proponents demonstrated their total unfamiliarity with the history of their own subject - that hoaxers repeatedly try to expose UFOlogists as gullible believers in exotic phenomena. By searching for an exotic solution to the evidence these UFOlogists betrayed UFOlogy for their own personal gain.

Instead of considering hoaxing or a "natural" solution these researchers immediately promoted crop circles as proof of "non human intelligences". They should have understood that they held a grave responsibility to UFOlogy to apply Occam's

Razor - to apply the simplest solution to the data - but instead they were guilty of creating a supernatural mythology which ultimately condemned hundreds of farmers around the world to endure wanton damage to their crops by mass trespass and hoaxing.

5. Reflections

Now that the hype and controversy has died down it is possible to look back on the crop circles and learn from what happened. The treatment of evidence is perhaps the most illuminating lesson we can learn from the crop circle disaster. To begin with, I have been fascinated to observe how both the Skeptics and Proponents of Crop Circles adopted extreme polarised viewpoints. The Skeptics position is best summed up by Martin Hempstead's outrageous claim that

"I see no indication that there has been any attempt to apply the scientific method, no rigorous testing of hypotheses. Instead - and this applies to all the major protagonists - there has been a haphazard accumulation of what might loosely be called 'data', and the construction of vast and shaky edifices of speculation".¹³

This statement ignores quite a few facts which have never appeared in The Skeptic, the official magazine of the Skeptics movement in Britain. It ignores the fact that

- (a) As Proponents of a natural/hoaxing solution Jenny Randles and myself searched through historical records in an attempt to find historical precedents for what was happening;
- (b) As Proponents of a natural/hoaxing solution Jenny Randles and myself predicted that hoaxing would occur and the patterns would become more complex - another testable and falsifiable hypothesis which was actually used by the Skeptics to demonstrate the man-made nature of numerous formations;
- (c) As proponents of a natural/hoaxing solution Jenny Randles and myself suggested that experiments be conducted to test different hoax methods (eg the helicopter tests on BBC TV);

(d) Meaden's atmospheric vortex made quantifiable predictions about when and where the plasma-vortex would occur and how it might behave; and

(e) Our "collection of data" was an entirely voluntary and unfunded activity severely restricted by lack of resources.

Despite these facts we have been accused by the Skeptics of being "obscurantists [who] adopt an open-minded stance the better to make even conventionally explainable phenomena seem mysterious" and of failing to adopt the "rigorous testing of hypotheses" ! ¹⁴

In the early years of circles research there were only Proponents involved in researching the subject - people who accepted that most of the circles they were examining were "genuine". By contrast the official Skeptics failed to do any research or investigation of any kind until 1990 when the Wessex Skeptics first appeared on the scene. During those ten long years the wilder UFO proponents whipped up a media hysteria which they used to promote themselves and their exotic belief systems at the expense of the farming community. Where were the Skeptics in those early years ? Why did they not become involved in researching the subject ? Did they not have a duty to Science and the public to investigate the phenomenon in the early 1980s ?

Sadly our experience demonstrates that the professional skeptics are highly skilled at saying "We told you so" but utterly unhelpful when it comes to doing basic research and investigation. Why is this ? Are skeptics not interested in doing open-minded research with people who want to know what's going on ? As responsible researchers we repeatedly voiced our suspicions about hoaxing and our desire to find a rational solution to the evidence. We would certainly have welcomed any offers of co-operation from other like-minded research groups, yet the Skeptics - without doing any research themselves - accuse us of failing to collect basic data !

Whilst the Skeptics stood by, the media hype surrounding the circles became more sensational

and ludicrous by the day. False claims were repeatedly made by the so-called circles experts without the slightest regard for the effect of their actions on the farming community. It soon became abundantly clear that unwelcome evidence was being wilfully suppressed in order to promote a lucrative mythology. It would be an easy task to list hundreds of media articles and interviews where it can be demonstrated that media pundits knowingly distorted events in the public arena for reasons they have never justified. In their internationally renowned best selling book "Circular Evidence" UFO authors Andrews and Delgado knowingly omitted proof of crop circle hoaxing known to them in 1987 as well as suppressing documented eye witness testimony which should have been a part of their allegedly "definitive" book. By suppressing unwelcome evidence the Proponents and their supporters in the media were guilty of fostering massive untruths onto an unsuspecting and indiscriminating public. Only myself and Jenny Randles were prepared to question what these people were saying and doing. Predictably we had no support whatsoever from the official Skeptics movement, and the media tended to ignore us as "party-poopers". ¹⁵

Now, as the true extent of crop circle hoaxing has become apparent, we have been faced with an even more condemning attitude from the Skeptics themselves. In the past few months I have been told by various Skeptics that "all crop circles" must by definition be man-made hoaxes because one must assign "zero value to all eye witness testimony". I've also been told that Doug and Dave must have "invented" the phenomenon of the sharp-edged crop circle because there are "no photographs of sharp edged crop circles predating Doug and Dave's circle making". It has even been claimed that

"Not that the Meadenites come out of this as working-class heroes. Their reluctance to jettison the natural phenomenon explanation, even when it was seemingly producing designs which were clearly man-made, shows that pig-headedness was not the prerogative of either side in this controversy" ¹⁶

Strange isn't it how myths are fostered and evidence suppressed by both sides of the debate ! Now of course I am merely a social scientist - someone who by definition must be a lesser scientist because I didn't study one of the pure sciences - so anything I say can be safely ignored by those Guardians of the One True Science. If I remember the old student joke properly you could get social science degrees and arts degrees on lavatory paper ! Well let me apologise for being a lesser scientist and instead briefly review what is left of the crop circle evidence so that I can ask the Professional Skeptics some embarrassing questions.

6. The Case for a Genuine Crop Circle Phenomenon

The case for a "genuine" crop circle phenomenon rests on three classes of evidence which have so far been ignored or suppressed by both the UFO Proponents and the Professional Skeptics. Despite what is being claimed there are some well documented historical crop circle cases which predate the earliest of Doug and Daves' man-made circles. These include the following:-

Versailles, France, 1909

In 1909 at Versailles in France a group of people witnessed a stationary whirlwind creating a circular trace in a dirt road. This multiple witness event was reported within a month in L'Astronomie.¹⁷

Orebro, Sweden, 1972

A pair of double rings appeared in a field.. The UFO Sweden Group measured and photographed these traces, although the photographs have not survived. According to Clas Svahn the edges of these rings were sharply defined and a swirl pattern was evident.¹⁸

Wokurna, Australia, 1973

A small sharp edged circle was discovered close to the only small hill in the area. Hills are central to Meaden's atmospheric eddy vortex theory.

The circle was photographed and measured. A full case study was produced which includes both photographs and a drawing of a sharp edged circle.¹⁹

Bordertown, Canada, 1973

A group of nine swirled patches were discovered in a field of oats. Photographs and measurements have survived, along with references to earlier circles in the 1960s.²⁰

Rosburn, Canada 1977

The UFO Research Manitoba team visited and photographed 11 small swirled patches that appeared in a field of wheat. The circles were arranged in pairs around a telegraph line and all measured between 8 and 20 feet in diameter. Doug Bower has confirmed that although he and Dave Chorley began making circles in 1975 or thereabouts they never made circles outside Britain.²¹

Evenlode, England, 1960

Hundreds of people visited a pair of double rings which featured in the local press as well as in various UFO magazines. No photographs have yet been located of this event but sketches made by John Llewellyn demonstrate that the pattern was sharply defined and in a remote rural location.²²

Note that these six events span a period of 68 years and come from six different nations. This immediately disproves the skeptics' false claim that crop circles are new and restricted to just one small geographic area in Southern England.

7. Anecdotal Recollections of Historical Crop Circles

In addition to the historic cases we have uncovered numerous anecdotal accounts of features which sound like crop circles dating back before the Second World War. Here are some examples:-

Christine Dutton of Bristol recalls seeing numerous crop circles on her husbands farm at Maiden Bradley six miles to the south of Warminster in Wiltshire between 1914 and 1956. ²³

Paul Germany recalls seeing two separate incidents when whirlwinds created crop circles at a farm near Helions Bumpstead on the Essex-Cambridgeshire border in the mid 1930s. According to other farm labourers these circles were known to have appeared since at least the 1860s. ²⁴

In a letter to the "Daily Express" in August 1990 Kathleen Skin claimed that she observed a small whirlwind creating two crop circles in July 1934 at Eversden, near Cambridge. She also claimed that the farmer who owned the field told her that he had often seen crop circles in his fields and that they were caused by the wind. ²⁵

Whilst researching "The Crop Circle Enigma" Ralph Noyes discovered several alleged historical crop circle cases. Mrs Jean Songhurst recalled seeing crop circles in County Donegal some sixty years ago. Apparently the farmers "kept quiet" about these circles because they "depended on every penny the corn merchants gave them, and rumours that something was amiss with

the crops could mean ruin". She recalls that circles also appeared on her uncles' farm near Thurso in Scotland in the 1890s. ²⁶

In addition to these cases there are plenty of modern witnesses who claimed to have seen crop circles being created by whirlwinds. Here are just two:-

Whilst horse riding at Littleton Down near Great Cheverill in 1983 Melvyn Bell observed a whirlwind creating a small single circle 10-12 metres in diameter some 50-60 metres away. The whirlwind was accompanied by dust and light debris as it spun out the circle. ²⁷

In early July 1982 Ray Barnes claims he observed a crop circle forming in a cornfield in the lee of a steep hill at Westbury in Wiltshire. The circle was approximately 75 feet across and formed in just 4 seconds. Significantly this occurred just as a thunderstorm passed over the area. This is one of several cases where crop circles are claimed to have formed as minor frontal systems passed overhead. ²⁸

There are more than 30 alleged eye witness cases in the crop circle literature - strangely these cases are never mentioned in the popular literature on this subject. ²⁹



Another Wiltshire hoax (Calyx News Agency, Swindon).

8. Embarrassing Questions

Now let's ask some Embarrassing Questions. If "all" crop circles throughout history are man-made hoaxes what does this evidence represent ? Why are there photographs and case reports of circular ground traces predating Doug and Dave ? Why have witnesses come forward claiming to recall crop circles dating back to the 1930s and beyond ? And what are the eye witnesses seeing ? Since Doug and Dave claim they based their hoax on the Tully reeds circles case of 1966 is it not possible that they merely mimicked a natural event ? At their Covent Garden meeting Ken Brown claimed that the Tully reeds circles were "blown down". Does this not suggest that even Doug and Dave accept that they based their hoaxes on a "natural" weather-based phenomenon ?

It is this eye witness testimony that really irritates the Professional Skeptics. Of course no one can deny the fact that some witnesses misreport even ordinary events. On this there can be no argument. A large body of psychological experimentation has demonstrated that both short and long term memory can be influenced by a large number of factors which reduce the reliability one can place on eye witness testimony. Despite this fact our entire Legal Profession is based on accepting the validity of eye witness testimony, so why is it that the Professional Skeptics go out of their way to avoid this evidence ? Instead they claim that eye witness testimony is not only fallible but that it must be completely ignored by Science in case the wrong conclusions are drawn !

It is this outright dismissal of eye witness testimony that has long been a feature of the "dry" super-skeptic. Astronomers spent two centuries dismissing the claims of the peasants that they had seen stones falling from the sky. It took a chemist to prove that the peasants were right and the astronomers wrong. Similarly meteorologists refused to accept the claim that balls of light manifested naturally in the atmosphere, dismissing them as retinal images

following real lightning strokes. Only the gradual accumulation of eye witness testimony and experimental evidence finally convinced the majority of meteorologists that they had been wrong to be so dismissive of eye witness testimony. That such super-skepticism can hinder proper scientific research is well demonstrated by the history of science. To dismiss all eye witness testimony out-of-hand implies that every scientific experiment ever conducted must also be dismissed - because scientists conducting experiments must employ eye witness testimony when reading the results of their tests !

By dismissing all eye witness testimony out-of-hand the professional skeptics are guilty of turning science on its head and of ignoring the lessons it teaches. Ironically the skeptical UFO researchers have much to teach the professional skeptics. When a witness misperceives a star as a UFO it is true that this proves that eye witness testimony is fallible. However, the star was really there - it was not a figment of the witnesses imagination, merely the basis of their error. It is also proof that people already possess a model of what UFOs are and what they look like stored in their subconscious minds. By totally dismissing this testimony as worthless the skeptics are missing two objectively-real phenomena - the star and the mind-set !

This brings me back to the eye witnesses. When people claim to have seen crop circles being formed by wind currents we know that both crop circles and wind currents exist, as both have been successfully recorded on film. Does this not suggest that despite the wide extent of hoaxing some crop circles may be meteorologically produced ? Such a hypothesis would be supported by the historical cases and the farmers own beliefs. It is also supported by recent laboratory experiments conducted by Professor Y.H. Ohtsuki, yet according to the professional skeptics all crop circles are hoaxes and this contrary evidence is not even worthy of debate. According to the professional skeptics science has already discovered all there is to be known and there are no poorly documented natural phenomena lying around waiting to be discovered !

9. Meaden's Plasma Vortex Theory

In 1989 Dr Terence Meaden published a ground-breaking book "The Circles Effect and Its Mysteries" (Artetech). In this book Meaden postulated that all but the most obvious crop circle hoaxes were created by a spinning electrically-charged vortex which possessed unusual properties. This "plasma vortex" was ionised and glowed. It frequently formed in the lee of hill slopes during stable atmospheric conditions. Whilst similar to ball lightning the plasma vortex could last for relatively long periods of time during which it interacted with its immediate environment. Meaden developed his theory in a second book, "Circles From The Sky" (Souvenir 1991), which contained contributions from a number of established academic atmospheric physicists who were prepared to support the concept in principle.

Meaden's plasma-vortex theory was immediately ridiculed extensively by the crop circle community. It also received a fairly lukewarm reception by the meteorological community, partly - we believe -because it discussed events which had been promoted in exotic terms by UFO believers. Meanwhile, more rational UFO researchers realised that Meaden was speaking their language. In UFO case after UFO case Meaden was proposing a mundane meteorologically-based explanation for the UFO data ! His theory was immediately used by Professor Y.H. Ohtsuki to account for an intriguing radar-visual UFO case from the Pacific Ocean. Ohtsuki and several other atmospheric research specialists attended a Conference at Oxford in 1990 to discuss this theory. Meanwhile Randles and myself applied Meaden's theory to the UFO data and found that many of the most intractable UFO cases met the conditions laid down by Meaden. At last a testable scientific explanation for the UFO data ! ³⁰

So far no one in the world has published alternative falsifiable explanations for the UFO cases that have been presented by ourselves and others as possible plasma-vortices. No one

has challenged our plasma-vortex interpretation of these UFO cases. Instead all we have received is contempt and ridicule along the lines that all UFO reports are nonsense and that science has nothing to learn from these cases. Are there no scientists prepared to challenge our claim with logic and argument ? ³¹

Sadly since the euphoria of 1990 the true extent of crop circle hoaxing has become apparent and Meaden's plasma vortex theory has been widely discredited by both crop circle believers and the Professional Skeptics. We accept that Meaden was over-optimistic to attempt to account for the most complex "pictogram" circles with reference to his atmospheric vortex theory. However - and again I point to the history of science - how many times has scientific knowledge been advanced by mistakes and errors ? What would have happened if Alexander Fleming had not accidentally left his samples so that they could quietly develop Penicillin ? Would Newton have developed his theory of gravity if when sitting under that apple tree he had decided to ignore his own eye witness testimony and simply assume that someone had thrown that apple at him ? And could it be that Meaden - in falsely trying to explain every single facet of the crop circle hoax - has accidentally stumbled across something important - a novel atmospheric mechanism capable of being misinterpreted as an exotic UFO ?

10. Challenge

It is true that by dismissing 99 per cent of the post 1975 data the crop circle researchers have made themselves a somewhat sticky wicket. Mistakes have been made and for many crop circle researchers strong public censure can be their only reward. However, a number of classes of evidence still remain which the Professional Skeptics have yet to debate or explain. Science expects complete answers to questions, not cries of "nonsense". To leave this evidence without proper public debate is not scientific and a betrayal of the Scientific Method. I challenge the Professional Skeptics to explain

what the eye witnesses are seeing if “all” crop circles throughout history are man-made hoaxes. I want to know where this historic belief in a meteorological explanation came from. And I want to know why - if “all” crop circles are hoaxes - did these alleged hoaxers not go on to create massive “pictogram” hoaxes after they made the Tully circles in 1966, or the Wokurna circle in 1973. Why did they stop at small very simple patterns and not follow Doug and Daves’ example of making progressively more massive and symbolic features ?

Remember, Science often progresses by faults and mistakes. By dismissing the entire subject and refusing to engage in further debate The Skeptics may be missing something important. For Science’s sake I challenge the Skeptics to reply. New UFOlogy will be happy to publish a response by any Skeptics organisation.

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The House On The Moors

*An investigation into a window
area contact case. (Part One).*

by Jenny Randles

The window opens

By now almost every Ufologist in the world knows about the weird goings on within the Todmorden window area. This region of the Pennine Hills, on the Lancashire - Yorkshire borders of northern England is famed in particular for the Alan Godfrey abduction story from November 1980. This qualified for a top 50 rating in Dr Eddie Bullard's catalogue of important spacenappings and is probably widely viewed as the most evidential case of its type to have occurred within the UK.

However, this story of a police officer being snatched from his patrol car and examined by small robotic creatures is far from unique (see my book "The Pennine UFO Mystery" - Grafton, 1983 - for a detailed report on the affair, plus the extraordinary sequel in "Death by supernatural causes ?" from Peter Hough and myself - Grafton, 1988). Indeed, the ITV documentary series "Strange but True?" featured the location in its 1993 pilot and cited the statistics that I had provided to them indicating how upwards of 10% of the known British close encounter cases had occurred within a five mile radius of this small mill town and its sister community, just across into Lancashire, which is called Bacup. The fact that I was born and raised in Bacup (well

the village of Stacksteads, in actuality) is something that may, or may not, have to be taken into account.

Strange lights have frequently plagued this area of millstone grit laden moorland and few who live in the gaggle of towns that comprise the Rossendale Valley and parts east towards Ilkley Moor are unaware of the legends. Several other abductions or alien contacts have been published. For example, in my 1994 book "Aliens : The Real Story" reported the case of Jenny, a woman from Walsden - the very village which Alan Godfrey once patrolled. Northern UFO News also publishes from time to time an update on things that still happen within this haunted zone.

None of this can be but a coincidence, of course. There must be something peculiar to the location that makes these window areas so rich in UFO activity. Most sensible researchers would conclude that it is connected with geophysical or atmospheric processes along the lines discussed by other writers in this magazine (notably Paul Devereux). However, research from sources such as Dr Terence Meaden (looking into plasma vortices - as discussed by Paul Fuller) and Albert Budden's ongoing work investigating electronic pollution effects may well all be part of a significant new direction for holistic research into natural energies.

One dimension to all of this inquiry that is easy to overlook is well illustrated by a new case that I came upon in 1993 and has so far remained undiscussed. I found it whilst Roy Sandbach and I were in Todmorden working with the team from LWT, planning for the eventual filming of "Strange but True?". However, the key witness was adamant that she wanted anonymity and so we did not bring her to the notice of the cameras and here are forced to refer to her simply as Elsie.

As a child of five or six years old Elsie fell over the bannister rails and injured her head. At this time she lived in Walsden and her injuries were so serious that the doctor was reputedly on the verge of signing a death certificate when she showed unexpected improvement and eventually recovered. Her mother always said when Elsie's strange adventures began that this was the starting point and in some way responsible.

Three years later, and with World War Two now raging, she met a woman on the moors who had been a neighbour but who had recently died. Elsie knew this lady well and is insistent that there was no possibility of a mistake. She saw and talked with a dead woman as if it were the most natural thing in the world. This was by no means the only occasion that this happened. Indeed, Elsie went on to develop mediumistic powers that would, she feels, allow her to take the stage alongside the likes of Doris Collins, were that what she was interested in, but it is not.

Elsie simply regards these voices and visions as a fact of life and, after many years coming to terms with what they were, does finally seem to have accepted them. However, during much of her childhood they produced fears about madness and serious illness which led to their complete repression from any open discussion.

These were by no means the only strange experiences that Elsie had as a child. Many of the events were bizarre, even by the standards of strange phenomena. For instance, she claimed to be able to see unknown faces in the mirror and would avoid looking into one whenever she could. Later, when TV was introduced, she had a game where she tried to visualise the picture that would come onto the screen next by looking into the window glass first. She claims to have been frequently successful.

Calendar

30th June 1994.

Falkirk Town Hall, Falkirk. Scotland.
UFOs Fact or Fiction

Speakers include:-
Malcolm Robinson.
Philip Mantle.
plus music from C.E.IV.

Hosted by Councillor Billy Buchanan.

Tickets £4.00.

Contact:- M Robinson, 41 The
Braes, Tullibody, Clackmannanshire.
FK10 2TT. (Tel:- 0259 724033).

27/28th August 1994.

Blackpool, Lancashire.

A 2 day conference organised by
the Lancashire Aerial Phenomena
Investigation Society.

Speakers include:-

Albert Budden.
Dr Serena Roney-Dougal.
Lucy Pringle.
Philip Mantle.
Jenny Randles.

- also a mystery guest speaker
who has requested anonymity
prior to his lecture.

Ticket £5 per day or £9 for both.

Contact:- LAPIS, 293 Devonshire
Road, Blackpool. FY2 0TW.
(Tel:- 0253 356821).

THE SKEPTICAL VIEW

We hope in future issues to use this regular column to bring direct views and opinions to you from some of the world's leading skeptical authorities. This is a conscious decision which the editorial team have taken but realise may not go down too well in certain quarters. However, we feel that too many UFOlogists regard skeptics as their enemy and never listen to what they have to say.

Although I, personally, would certainly not pretend that everything the critics say is worth listening to (there is just as much claptrap spoken by them as by supporters of UFOlogy) it is nonetheless a mistake to reject it all out of hand. So, we will be listening to what they have to say, commenting honestly about it and throwing open this column to those people who want to express negative views for themselves.

We have had tacit offers of support from British psychologist, Dr Susan Blackmore, whose opinions about alien contact experiences will, I am sure, be of value. And the arch critic of American UFOlogy, Philip Klass, says that we can bring to you what he has to say in his own newsletter, even if he does not have time to write anything original (although we hope that now and then he will).

This is an experiment for a UFO magazine, but one that we believe needs to be adopted if this journal is to fulfill its aim of being truly objective.

So - skeptics - the floor is yours. Do what you can to show that UFOlogy is of no importance and offers no valuable scientific data.

Undoubtedly the skeptical talking point of the moment is the first book by long term UFO critic Steuart Campbell. His "The UFO Mystery:Solved!" pulls no punches as the title infers. Steuart was for a long time Scotland's leading BUFORA investigator and I was sorry to lose him as his then Director of Investigators when, after several requests, he refused to sign allegiance to the code of practice governing investigator dealings with the witness. BUFORA had decided that this form of self-governing should be mandatory for its team, but Steuart objected to the code on a matter of principle, not, I should stress, because he was behaving unethically in his research.

After leaving the investigation team he focused on his attempts to find rational solutions to the UFO mystery, something for which I certainly applaud him. I recall that he once tried very hard to show that many UFO sightings might be explicable as forms of ball lightning, an opinion that I do not consider unlikely. However, he then became ensnared by his latest idea, around which this book is largely built, which indicates that a large number of what were considered to be classic cases are in truth observations of stars and planets under unusual atmospheric conditions. They are, in effect, mirages - just like light rays from the sky can be bent on a hot road surface to create the illusion of a pool of water in the path of your car.

Again, this is a positive kind of skepticism - just the sort which I believe UFOlogy needs. It is far better than dismissing the field as nonsense or filled with hoaxes merely to get rid of a troublesome mystery. At least it is an attempt to identify cases - which no serious UFOlogist can deny should be our

main task . In real terms what Steuart is doing is no more wrong than or different from the researcher who theorises that most UFOs are plasma vortices, earthlights or, indeed, alien spaceships.

Therefore, I have no objection to his concept and do believe it may apply in some cases. I can think of three or four that I have investigated where the star mirage theory suggested itself to the investigation team or, where looking at Steuart's data I would now say it was a feasible option. There are probably others.

One case, from Heywood in Lancashire, has recently been the subject of "Men in Black" speculation in one British UFO journal, and the witnesses (ambulancemen and police) were certainly credible. There was also talk of "electromagnetic interference" (although research by the objective local group NARO - seems to have ruled that out). Indeed, it seems probable that the smart, well dressed men in dark suits seen visiting the witnesses by another investigator and thought, thus, to have prevented them from speaking further, were in fact the three well groomed NARO investigators!

Unfortunately, as with many theories, I fear that Steuart tends to overplay his hand. He attempts to apply it to so many cases - including quite remarkable ones - that you begin to wonder if the concept has any substance whatsoever. The Alan Godfrey abduction case, for instance, is said to be a possible mirage of the planet venus. Yet to fit this solution Steuart has the witness driving in exactly the opposite direction down Burnley Road , Todmorden, to that in which he himself has said that he was moving. I recall the debate we had in BUFORAs magazine about this issue at the time when Steuart first mooted his theory, yet, surprisingly, in his book he fails to point out that there is dispute on this point

I have stood on the site with the witness, his testimony has never wavered and under regression hypnosis he clearly describes himself driving in such a way that the UFO cannot have been venus, via a mirage or any other process, as it was behind him and so out of sight. I do not think this fact can reasonably be challenged, but would be glad to hear Steuart's reasoning if he still says that it can. Its a pity he does not give this reasoning in the book.

So, with cases such as this I have a suspicion that there is a tendency to try to force the theory to work. That is a shame as it may well distract readers from an otherwise sensible book. I have just spent several paragraphs having to discuss a case where I feel Steuart's theory is badly applied (although, in mitigation, I might add that I do feel the planet venus probably contributed to some of the "back up" sightings that others made in Todmorden that night). Applied with a little more care and less "shoot em down" gusto, I suspect that Steuart Campbell is really onto something. This book is certainly well worth your attention. But as a solution to many, or even most, UFO sightings, somehow I doubt it.

Jenny Randles

The UFO Mystery: Solved! by Steuart Campbell is published by Explicit Book, Edinburgh.

**For advertising enquiries
please contact the editorial
address. (See page 2).**

SIGHTINGS UPDATE

by Jenny Randles

In this section of each magazine we hope to carry summaries of important cases that have been investigated in the period under review. If you are an investigator and would like to contribute please send a precis of your case after investigation is concluded which should contain the following details.

The date, time and location of the sighting, brief description of what took place, your attempts to identify what was seen and your conclusions about the case, whether explained or not.

The most significant new cases, be they UFOs or IFOs, will be included in this column with full credit to the investigators, or addresses of your group included if you prefer. Witness names will not be identified.

You need not send in full case files; however, it is the intention of the editorial team to maintain an open set of case files that will be available to all readers for research purposes at some mutually decided central location (ie not simply someone's living room - a truly accessible venue!) So any case files that are submitted will be there for the benefit of all .

Date:- 16th January 1994.

Location:- Plas Newton.

Investigator:- Roy Sandbach.

Four witnesses reported seeing a strange object hovering for around 10 minutes. It was a big oval with red, blue, and white bars of light. After changing colour it then flew away.

Investigator's conclusion:- This sighting seems suspiciously akin to an airship - by which we have been plagued of late.

.....

Date:- 22nd February 1994.

Location:- Linwood, Lincolnshire..

Investigator:- Ric Millen.

The witness was travelling on the B1202 road between the villages of Linwood and Lissington, near Market Rasen. In the sky ahead he saw a triangular formaton of lights moving SE. The witness pulled into the roadside and got out of his car to watch. There was no sound form the lights and they filled an area of sky slightly larger than the full moon.

There were two groups of four with two lights in between these, making a total of nine lights in all. They took about three minutes to move out of view.

Investigator's conclusion: - This certainly seems to be the same phenomenon seen in other cases in Lincolnshire and has some similarities with those in Belgium and in Staffordshire some years ago - which, you may recall, turned out to be refuelling excercises.

If you have a computer and a modem then why not connect to Stairway To Heaven Bulletin Board System for the latest in UFO discussions.

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The Last Word

New Ice Ring Case From Scotland

by Paul Fuller

Regular readers of Fortean Times will have seen the excellent summary of ice ring cases by Bob Rickard in FT74 (April/May 1994). This article takes a close look at nine ice ring cases dating back to 1930. The photographs show a variety of highly regular patterns which Rickard rightly compares with the crop circle phenomenon, observing how both phenomena attract the same kinds of theories - meteorological, hydrological, hoax or alien intelligence, depending on your point of view.

Whilst FT was putting this article together Jenny Randles sent me a letter from someone in Scotland who has requested complete anonymity. The writer states that

"On two days here I had two quite different and most regular circles on thin snow-covered ice" (letter dated 12th August 1993).

After some coaxing "JHD" kindly sent me photocopies of his photographs of the ice rings that have appeared close to his home. One photograph shows what appears to be a double set of rings about 10 metres out into a wide river. There also appears to be two inner rings only a few centimeters wide very close to the centre of the circle but it is difficult to tell due to the poor quality of the photocopy. In the foreground there is what may well be the second outer ring, but it is not possible to determine if this ring continues to the far side of the river.

The second photocopy shows what in crop circle terms would be described as a ringed single. There is a central circular hole 2-3 metres across surrounded by a ring of ice 1-2 metres across followed by the outer ring 1-2 metres across. Of course these

dimensions are mere guesses as it seems likely that no proper measurements exist.

In both photographs the river must be about 30 metres wide. It is not clear if both rings formed at precisely the same spot. There is snow on the banks of the river and the handful of trees look decidedly bare. Presumably like the formations listed in the FT article both these rings formed during the depths of winter.

The first photograph closely resembles the double rings that appeared on the Charles River at Waltham, Massachusetts, in January 1991 (photo on page 25 of FT article) whilst the second photograph more closely resembles the ring reproduced on the back cover of issue 8 of The Crop Watcher (with the addition of a central hole). In both cases running water can be seen in the foreground.

It is not known whether these rings were rotating or not. I have kept "JHD" informed of recent articles about the phenomenon and hope to receive further news.

The importance of the ice ring debate is that it seems that (like crop circles) another natural phenomenon has been discovered where historical documentation is remarkably thin on the ground. According to Rickard's article it wasn't until 1987 that UFO Sweden first published an account of the ice rings they investigated at Pitealven and Kalixalven. Only one truly historical photograph has so far been discovered (from 1930), so if ice rings are a natural phenomenon why did UFOlogists fail to promote earlier accounts. Like crop circles several ice ring cases involve multiple rings. In at least one case unidentified flying objects have been linked with the phenomenon. It all sounds remarkably familiar doesn't it!

If ice rings are an example of a hitherto rarely documented natural phenomenon then why can't crop circles be the same? In this reviewer's opinion it would take just one well authenticated photograph of a crop circle from the 1930s or beyond to elevate the crop circle debate back to a scientific platform. Just one. And don't forget, there have been several near misses in our search for an unambiguous historical crop circle photograph (we have, for example, not publicised the pre war photograph that surfaced a couple of years ago of a Whiskey Distillery near

Dundee which appeared to show four small regular shaped markings in the bottom right-hand corner, as the angle of sight reduced the value of the photograph).

As this issue goes to press Paul Fuller has been sent 16 computer listings from the National Monuments Record at the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England, based in Swindon. I intend visiting the centre before the end of July to see if I can locate photographic proof of the numerous anecdotal crop circle reports we have been collecting since the mid 1980s. Of course, as the Wessex Skeptics have pointed out, a historic photograph of a crop circle is no proof that historic crop circles are not man-made too. Nevertheless it would be a major step forward. Perhaps a month or so from now the crop circle pendulum will have swung back the other way ?

■ False Memory Verdict Angers Therapists

In what could be a major legal precedent for alien abduction researchers a court in California has awarded half a million dollars in damages against two therapists who accidentally implanted a false memory of childhood incest during hypnotic regression sessions with 23 year old Holly Ramona. The case, which has been widely covered in the British and American press, was bought by Holly's father, Gary Ramona, who had previously been a highly paid executive of a Napa Valley wine company. Holly had visited therapists to find a cure for bulimia, but under regression hypnosis and the use of sodium anytal (which was incorrectly believed by the therapist to be a "truth serum") Holly was wrongly informed that "70 to 80 per cent" of bulimia patients were survivors of childhood incest and sexual abuse.

Like many close encounter witnesses Holly had no conscious recollection of childhood abuse but following her hypnotherapy treatment she openly accused her father of abusing her between the ages of five and sixteen. Despite repeated protestations of his innocence Gary Ramona lost his job, his marriage and his family. Commenting on his successful lawsuit Ramona claimed that

"The jury accepted what I have always known, that

Holly's supposed memories are the result of the defendants' drugs and quackery".

This decision, if upheld by any future legal proceedings, must cause considerable alarm in certain quarters, for if one can put a price on implanting "false" memories induced by dubious hypnotic techniques, what level of damages could be demanded for implanting false memories of abduction and rape by brutal all-powerful aliens ? For some years now UFO researchers in Britain and the United States have been employing regression hypnosis to find out what "really happened" during UFO encounters. In most cases the hypnotists are not fully qualified to conduct such work, and in the majority of cases the hypnotherapists already have strong pro-alien intelligence leanings, having been led to believe that UFO cases, if they represent anything at all, represent encounters with alien intelligences.

Since 1988 the British UFO Research Association imposed a moratorium on hypnotic regression techniques because of mounting concern that the technique was potentially damaging to witnesses well-being. Sadly this lead was not followed by other UFO groups. Meanwhile, in North America the False Memory Syndrome Foundation was founded to help victims of the technique to cope with what appears to be nothing more than a trendy method of legitimising sensational and otherwise unsubstantiated claims. Now this concern has materialised in what could be a crucially important court ruling.

According to The Times (May 16) over 400 families in Britain are claiming to have suffered from similar false claims induced by regression hypnosis :-

"From today, all 'recovered memory' therapists have had a brake put on their lurid imaginings: the principle has been laid down that they are not only answerable to their own patients, but to others whose airy diagnoses may affect".

Already rumours reaching us suggest that leading US UFOlogists are facing similar lawsuits from witnesses who have been led to believe similar false tales. The New UFOlogist hopes that these developments will finally put a halt on the use of this highly dubious technique.